



PRESS RELEASE

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USAID Partners with Ministry of Construction to Improve Safety on Yangon-Mandalay Highway

Yangon – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ministry of Construction signed a letter of agreement on May 27 to improve the safety of the Yangon-Mandalay Highway. The highway is the main ground route from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw, through the center of the country.

U.S. architecture and engineering experts will train and mentor Ministry of Construction engineers and technicians in international highway safety standards as they construct safety enhancements along a ten kilometer section of road. This demonstration section, funded in cooperation with the U.S. Government, will serve as a model for ongoing improvements implemented by the Ministry of Construction along the full length of the highway.

“The United States is committed to supporting continued reform and broad-based economic development. As the economy grows, transportation infrastructure will have to accommodate more trade and traffic,” said U.S. Ambassador Derek J. Mitchell. “But this issue is about more than economic development; it is about saving lives. I am pleased the United States will be able to improve a small section of the Yangon-Mandalay Highway, and work with the Ministry of Construction to help address very real concerns about safety standards.”

The Yangon-Mandalay Highway stretches 386 miles between Yangon, the country’s commercial center, and Mandalay, a city of approximately one million people. Three thousand vehicles drive the highway every day. Increased speed and a lack of standard highway safety measures have resulted in a disproportionately high number of vehicular fatalities on this road.

The agreement formalizes a partnership that began with a preliminary safety survey in May 2013. At the request of the Union Government, USAID engineers assessed the design, traffic volume, vehicle speed, and existing safety measures along the entirety of the highway. The assessment concluded that the most effective means to achieve scalable road safety improvements is through technical assistance and training on safety standards, bringing experience and best practices from the United States to help improve the safety and security of the country’s roads.

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